

## **Housing Authority - County of Los Angeles**

June 23, 2014

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Sean Rogan, Executive Director



**SUBJECT: REPORT BACK ON FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY POLICING PROGRAM**

On June 3, 2014 the Board of Supervisors requested information on the Community Development Commission's funding request for the Housing Authority's Countywide Community Policing Program (CPP). This report addresses the Board specific questions as well as others raised by the Chief Executive Office.

### **Background**

For the past twenty years, the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) has contracted with the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department (LASD) for supplemental law enforcement services to operate an effective, nationally recognized crime reduction program. This program has resulted in a dramatic and sustained reduction in crime throughout all 70 housing developments within the County of Los Angeles.

Funding for this program was initially provided by targeted federal grants up until 2001. Since this time, HACoLA utilized a combination of non-HUD grants, HUD CDBG grants, and operating subsidies to continue this program. In recent years the sole funding source has been operating subsidies which are meant to cover operating expenses such as building maintenance, landscaping, utilities, insurance, and staff salaries. This funding source has not kept pace with the rising costs associated with operating the County's public housing portfolio and resulted in a substantial reduction of officers assigned to the CPP. This past year HACoLA residents experienced an increase in crime victimization at several of the housing developments that were most impacted by the reduction of officers.

HACoLA has submitted a request for \$1.9M in County General funds to restore the CPP at 2001 levels which included 8 sheriffs, 2 Long Beach police officers and two sergeants.

### **Questions from the Board**

The following is being submitted in response to the questions raised by the Board at its meeting of June 3, 2014.

1. Can the CDC/HACoLA sustain the program for another year for less than the \$1.9 million from the County General Fund?

Yes, HACoLA has provided full funding for this program at a reduced level of \$1.3M at the expense of other competing priorities such as deferred maintenance and resident services which include staffing the computer learning centers, providing on site recreation programs and providing case management services for families and seniors. Although HACoLA would be able to continue funding this program for one more year (FY 2014-15) at the reduced level of \$1.3M, it will need to redirect funding for deferred building maintenance. This funding level would continue the inadequate staffing levels of four LASD deputies and one Sergeant to cover 70 HACoLA sites. The staffing levels for our largest housing development in Long Beach would continue with two Long Beach police officers.

2. Are we (County) backfilling a program that was eliminated by the Federal Government? What is the status of lobbying efforts to have the federal government re-fund the program and what is the likelihood they will re-fund the program?

No, HACoLA opted to utilize federal grants targeted to reducing drugs in public housing by implementing the CPP model. This supplemental law enforcement approach was never an official federal program, but rather a local solution that was developed to reduce all crimes within public housing.

The Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP) grants that were used for this purpose were only available from 1989-1999. Since the funding ended, HACoLA has submitted State and Federal funding priorities to the CEO annually addressing the need to fund these types of activities. HACoLA staff monitor daily Federal grant opportunities and has applied for U.S. Department of Justice grants individually and jointly with LASD and the City of Long Beach/Long Beach Police Department (LBPD). To address the gap in funding, HACoLA received two Congressional grants to support security technology and a CPP gang enforcement program. HACoLA has hosted numerous members of Congress and recently the Board of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials which has supported the reauthorization of PHDEP. Each visit is an opportunity to showcase HACoLA's nationally recognized program and to advocate for funding. There has been no indication from HUD that it intends to re-fund PHDEP or any similar programs.

3. What funding source was used to pay for this program in the past?

Since the elimination of the PHDEP grants, HACoLA has used a combination of funds which include non-HUD grants, HUD CDBG grants and HACoLA's operating subsidy.

4. Can the CEO work with the CDC/HACoLA to determine the exact amount needed?

CDC/HACoLA has met with the CEO, CDC deputies and budget deputies to review the funding request and optimum staffing levels for the CPP.

5. Has the CDC/HACoLA approached LASD and LBPD to provide the CPP level of service?

Yes, HACoLA has approached both LASD and LBPd in the past to explore options. Both organizations only provide basic law enforcement service to HACoLA residents similar to that of any County/City resident. The scope of service of the successful HACoLA CPP is considered supplemental service by both departments and is also different from the respective Departments' community policing programs. Both departments indicated that without funding they would discontinue the program. HACoLA welcomes resources from any source including that of both departments, but it is critical that the current CPP model be employed as it is a proven model with a 20 year track record of effectiveness.

6. Is the Community Policing Program a federally mandated program? If not, please describe exactly what it is.

The CPP is not a federally mandated program. HACoLA opted to employ this model in response to the large number of violent crimes that were occurring in and around the housing developments countywide that included murder, rape, armed robbery, and gang violence. The CPP yielded dramatic results at Nueva Maravilla, the first housing development where it was deployed. It was eventually expanded to cover all 70 housing developments and has garnered local and national awards, not only for reducing crime, but for sustaining this achievement over 20 years. HACoLA believes so firmly in this program that it continued to fund it long after grant funds were no longer available. The only mandates from the federal government in relation to public housing revolve around program eligibility and building maintenance.

7. Why is your request simply not asking the County to back-fill the reduction?

As stated earlier, HACoLA cannot sustain the level of funding needed to fully operate the CPP at its optimum level without continuing to defer much needed and overdue maintenance items. In order to provide stability in maintaining a policing model that has demonstrated its maximum effectiveness, HACoLA is requesting funding to restore the program back to 2001 levels to prevent crime from creeping back to the levels that existed prior to program implementation.

8. What is the impact on the quantity/quality of the program with the reduced amount of funding? Fully restored amount of funding?

HACoLA has already started to feel the impact of reduced CPP staffing levels. Specifically, the annual crime victimization survey reveals that developments where CPP teams were most reduced have experienced a rise in victimization rates. A team of four deputies to cover such a vast geographical area is simply insufficient to continue to effectively impact crime. Our housing developments are the gold standard for public housing as it relates to large urban cities/counties that operate large housing developments in predominantly high crime neighborhoods. Prior to the CPP the LASD and LBPd responded to over 500 incidents of reported crime annually. This has been reduced to 85 by 2013.

The benefits of the program go well beyond the borders of our housing developments. The surrounding communities of these 70 housing developments benefit from the lower levels of crime. All of the LASD substations benefit by not having to respond to as many calls for service and the strain on their investigative, narcotics, and gang prevention units are lessened as a result of the great work done by the CPP teams.

Budget Request/Recommendation

As previously stated, HACoLA has submitted a request for \$1.9M in County General funds to restore the CPP at 2001 levels which included 8 sheriffs, 2 Long Beach police officers and two sergeants. The Chief Executive Office has included a recommendation in its FY 2014-15 Final Changes action (on the June 23, 2014 agenda) to allocate \$600K on-going net County cost to cover approximately half of current service level cost of \$1.3M.

Please let me know if you have any questions.